associated with control over real property in most tribal societies. Among the Yąnomamö the corporate estate consists of rights in disposing of females; property does not play any role in the functioning of the descent group.

The relationship between males in regulating the disposition of the descent group's women is ambiguous, for their rights in particular women vary, largely with genealogical distance and the size of the descent group in question. And, rights in women are intangible. Thus, local descent groups[1] among the Yąnomamö, despite the fact that they are corporate, are not cohesive, solidary units because of the ambiguous way male members are related to each other.

Patrilineal descent is virtually non-functional outside the local descent group. There are no corporate descent groups other than those that exist at the village level, i.e., the Yąnomamö do not have clans or moieties. Hence, agnates not only enter into competition with each other because of the nature of their rights in the women of their group, there are no other institutions based on agnatic descent that promote amity and solidarity among them.

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[1]"The core of such a group is composed of the adult males of a kin group all resident in one place . . . the corporate group of persons who have the most decisive say in bringing about an arranged marriage is always a group of coresident males representing, as a rule, three genealogical generations, namely: the old men or grandfathers, the normal adults or fathers, and the young adults or sons." E. R. Leach, 1963:56. Among the Yąnomamö, the generation of grandfathers is only rarely represented in the local descent group.